

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15

ACDA-19 IO-14 AEC-11 SCI-06 SCEM-02 EB-11 DRC-01

COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 INT-08 /165 W

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8756

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN FUCHU JAPAN

COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JAPAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 16183

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILL, JA

SUBJ: TANAKA'S ALLEGED REMARK ON GOJ NUCLEAR SUBMARINES

1. JAPAN TIMES FOR DECEMBER 13 RAN FRONT-PAGE STORY ON PM TANAKA'S REPLY IN HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING TO TETSU UEDA (JSP). ARTICLE ALLEDGES TANAKA MADE REMARKS TO EFFECT THAT QUOTE: TIME HAD COME FOR THE NATION'S DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH RELY HEAVILY ON OIL, TO BE THOROUGHLY REVIEWED. THOUGH HE FAILED TO SPECIFY WHAT THE DEFENSE ARRANGEMENTS INDEPENDENT FROM OIL WERE, HE CITED NUCLEAR SUBMARINES IN A RELATED STATEMENT. UNQUOTE.

2. ACCORDING TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE HEARING PROVIDED US BY JDA, TANAKA SAID: QUOTE WITHOUT OIL, DEFENSE ACTIVITY WILL NATURALLY BECOME VERY LIMITED. AND IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO THINK ABOUT BUILDING UP OIL RESERVES, OR DEVELOP AND IMPORT OIL RESOURCES. AND BECAUSE THIS IS A MATTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, WE MAY THINK ABOUT OTHER ENERGY RESOURCES AND HOW THEY CAN BE UTILIZED, AND ABOUT SUCH THINGS AS NUCLEAR-POWERED
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SUBMARINES OR NUCLEAR-POWERED SHIPS INSTEAD OF (SHIPS POWERED

BY) OIL. HOWEVER, NUCLEAR ENERGY MUST NOT BE USED FOR ANY-
THING BUT PEACEFUL PURPOSES. AND BECAUSE (THE DEFENSE STRUC-
TURE) IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROTECTING THE LIVES AND PROPERTY
OF THE PEOPLE AS A WHOLE, AND TO MAINTAIN OUR INDEPENDENCE,
ALL ASPECTS OF PROBLEMS CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE
MOST EFFECTIVE AND SAFEST FORM OF DEFENSE STRUCTURE MUST BE
THOUGHT THROUGH. I DO NOT THINK THAT IT WILL DO FOR US TO
BUILD UP OUR DEFENSE FORCES ON THE PREMISE THAT THEY CAN ONLY
RELY ON OIL THAT CAN, AS IN THE PAST, BE OBTAINED CHEAPLY
AND BROUGHT IN AT ANY TIME. UNQUOTE.

3. NO NEWSPAPER HAS PICKED UP THIS STORY OTHER THAN THE
"JAPAN TIMES". NEITHER FONOFF NOR JDA HAVE RECEIVED ANY
PRESS QUERIES ON TANAKA'S REMARKS.

4. COMMENT: TANAKA'S REMARKS ATTRACTED LITTLE ATTENTION HERE
SINCE IT HAS BEEN WIDELY BELIEVED THAT, DESPITE OIL CRISIS,
NUCLEAR PROPULSION FOR MSDF SHIPS WAS OUT OF QUESTION. JDA
HAS NEVER FORECLOSED NUCLEAR PROPULSION OPTION FOR MSDF
SHIPS. JDA DIRECTOR GENERAL NISHIMURA, FOR EXAMPLE, WHEN
QUERIED SOME 18 MONTHS AGO, SAID THAT GOJ WOULD ADOPT NUCLEAR
PROPULSION FOR ITS WARSHIPS WHEN MANY OTHER MARITIME NATIONS
HAVE DONE SO, AND THERE WAS NATIONAL CONSENSUS IN JAPAN FOR
SUCH ACTION. WE BELIEVE THAT NATIONAL CONSENSUS CANNOT BE
OBTAINED WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE SPADEWORK. MUTSU, JAPAN'S
NUCLEAR-POWERED COMMERCIAL SHIP LAUNCHED IN 1969 AND READY
FOR TEST RUNS SINCE OCTOBER 1972, CONTINUES TO BE BOTTLED
UP IN ITS HOME PORT DUE TO OPPOSITION OF FISHERMEN WHO FEAR
CONTAMINATION OF FISHING GROUNDS. GIVEN THIS SITUATION EVEN
WITH REGARD TO COMMERCIAL SHIP, GIVEN FACT THAT JDA IS OPERAT-
ING UNDER SHADOW OF NAGANUMA DECISION, AND FACT THAT NUCLEAR
PROPULSION WOULD GREATLY EXTEND RANGE OF MSDF SHIPS, THEREBY
PUTTING THEM IN CATEGORY OF "OFFENSIVE" WEAPONRY IN EYES OF
OPPOSITION PARTIES, IT APPEARS LESS THAN LIKELY THAT GOJ
WOULD OPT FOR MSDF NUCLEAR PROPULSION ANYTIME SOON.
SHOESMITH

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